



2.2

Labor force structure

	Labor force participation rate				Labor force					
	1990	Male	% ages 15 and older		1990	2007	Total millions	Ages 15 and older average annual % growth 1990-2007	Female % of labor force	
		2007	1990	2007					1990	2007
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Albania	84	71	67	50	1.7	1.4	-0.9	43.4	41.9	
Algeria	75	78	23	37	7.0	13.9	4.0	23.6	31.9	
Angola	90	89	74	75	4.5	7.5	2.9	46.4	46.6	
Argentina	79	76	29	50	12.0	18.3	2.5	28.4	41.1	
Armenia	79	68	66	56	1.8	1.5	-1.1	48.0	49.9	
Australia	76	72	52	57	8.5	10.9	1.5	41.2	44.8	
Austria	70	68	43	52	3.5	4.2	1.0	40.8	44.7	
Azerbaijan	78	71	66	60	3.4	4.3	1.4	48.2	48.1	
Bangladesh	89	85	62	57	50.9	74.3	2.2	39.5	39.2	
Belarus	75	66	60	53	5.3	4.9	-0.5	48.9	48.8	
Belgium	61	60	36	46	3.9	4.7	1.0	39.0	44.4	
Benin	88	86	51	59	1.9	3.7	3.9	38.2	40.5	
Bolivia	85	83	46	66	2.5	4.4	3.3	36.1	45.0	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	83	67	69	53	2.5	1.9	-1.7	46.7	46.1	
Botswana	78	63	44	48	0.5	0.7	2.4	37.7	43.7	
Brazil	85	82	39	60	59.3	97.7	2.9	32.1	43.3	
Bulgaria	64	57	57	46	4.2	3.4	-1.3	48.4	46.2	
Burkina Faso	90	90	76	77	3.9	6.7	3.2	47.4	46.8	
Burundi	90	90	91	90	2.8	4.2	2.4	52.5	51.4	
Cambodia	85	87	77	75	4.3	7.5	3.2	52.4	48.7	
Cameroon	79	75	53	52	4.4	7.0	2.7	40.8	41.3	
Canada	76	73	58	63	14.7	18.5	1.3	44.1	46.6	
Central African Republic	88	87	69	67	1.3	1.9	2.2	46.6	45.5	
Chad	84	77	57	71	2.3	4.3	3.6	41.4	48.7	
Chile	77	72	32	39	5.0	7.0	2.0	30.6	36.0	
China	85	80	73	71	650.6	785.7	1.1	44.8	45.7	
Hong Kong, China	80	70	47	53	2.9	3.6	1.4	36.3	45.3	
Colombia	77	79	44	64	13.4	22.1	2.9	35.9	44.2	
Congo, Dem. Rep.	86	90	60	54	14.6	23.5	2.8	42.5	38.6	
Congo, Rep.	84	83	57	56	0.9	1.5	2.8	41.4	41.1	
Costa Rica	85	79	36	43	1.2	2.0	3.0	29.2	34.5	
Côte d'Ivoire	89	85	42	39	4.6	7.1	2.5	29.6	30.6	
Croatia	75	60	52	45	2.4	2.0	-1.2	43.2	44.5	
Cuba	73	69	36	45	4.5	5.2	0.9	33.2	39.2	
Czech Republic	80	68	61	51	5.7	5.2	-0.5	45.5	44.2	
Denmark	75	71	62	61	2.9	2.9	0.0 ^a	46.1	46.7	
Dominican Republic	82	73	26	57	2.5	4.2	3.1	24.0	43.8	
Ecuador	78	79	33	52	3.5	5.9	3.2	29.5	40.0	
Egypt, Arab Rep.	74	71	24	24	15.9	24.0	2.4	24.4	25.3	
El Salvador	80	79	51	47	2.0	2.8	2.2	41.2	38.8	
Eritrea	88	86	55	55	1.2	1.9	2.8	40.4	41.0	
Estonia	72	65	61	54	0.8	0.7	-1.0	50.3	49.8	
Ethiopia	89	91	63	80	19.7	37.9	3.8	42.4	47.3	
Finland	71	65	59	58	2.6	2.7	0.2	47.5	48.0	
France	65	62	46	50	24.8	28.0	0.7	43.3	46.0	
Gabon	83	80	63	62	0.4	0.6	2.6	44.0	43.8	
Gambia, The	86	84	70	70	0.4	0.8	3.5	45.4	45.8	
Georgia	83	74	67	55	3.1	2.3	-1.6	48.2	46.3	
Germany	73	66	46	51	39.3	41.4	0.3	40.9	44.8	
Ghana	74	73	73	72	6.4	10.5	3.0	49.4	48.9	
Greece	67	65	36	43	4.2	5.2	1.3	36.2	40.4	
Guatemala	89	85	28	45	2.8	4.9	3.2	23.7	37.1	
Guinea	90	89	80	79	2.8	4.5	2.7	47.2	47.1	
Guinea-Bissau	87	90	56	54	0.4	0.6	2.8	40.3	38.4	
Haiti	81	83	49	39	2.6	3.6	2.0	39.4	33.4	

Labor force structure

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PEOPLE

	Labor force participation rate				Labor force					
	Male		% ages 15 and older		Total millions		Ages 15 and older average annual % growth	Female % of labor force		
	1990	2007	1990	2007	1990	2007	1990-2007	1990	2007	
Honduras	87	82	37	37	1.6	2.6	2.6	30.0	31.7	
Hungary	66	59	47	44	4.6	4.3	-0.4	44.6	45.2	
India	85	82	35	34	321.9	447.7	1.9	27.6	28.2	
Indonesia	81	86	50	50	75.3	110.5	2.3	38.4	36.9	
Iran, Islamic Rep.	81	75	22	32	15.6	27.8	3.4	20.2	29.2	
Iraq	74	..	12	..	4.4	..	..	13.3	..
Ireland	70	73	36	53	1.3	2.2	2.9	34.3	42.5	
Israel	62	61	41	50	1.7	2.9	3.2	40.6	46.3	
Italy	66	61	36	39	24.0	25.3	0.3	37.0	40.4	
Jamaica	80	74	66	55	1.1	1.2	0.3	46.6	44.0	
Japan	77	72	50	48	63.9	65.7	0.2	40.6	41.2	
Jordan	68	72	11	16	0.7	1.6	5.0	12.6	16.9	
Kazakhstan	78	75	62	65	7.8	8.2	0.3	47.0	49.3	
Kenya	90	87	75	74	9.9	17.4	3.3	46.0	46.4	
Korea, Dem. Rep.	79	78	51	58	9.6	12.4	1.5	40.6	44.0	
Korea, Rep.	73	73	47	49	19.1	24.3	1.4	39.3	40.8	
Kuwait	81	81	34	43	0.8	1.4	2.9	21.6	24.0	
Kyrgyz Republic	74	75	58	53	1.8	2.3	1.5	46.1	42.8	
Lao PDR	83	80	80	79	1.8	2.9	2.6	49.6	50.5	
Latvia	77	69	63	54	1.4	1.2	-1.2	49.6	48.2	
Lebanon	83	77	22	25	1.0	1.5	2.4	22.8	25.6	
Lesotho	85	75	68	68	0.7	0.9	1.5	50.9	52.4	
Liberia	85	85	54	55	0.8	1.4	3.3	39.3	39.8	
Libya	78	78	17	26	1.2	2.3	3.6	15.5	23.5	
Lithuania	74	61	59	51	1.9	1.6	-1.1	48.1	49.5	
Macedonia, FYR	73	66	54	42	0.9	0.9	-0.1	42.7	39.3	
Madagascar	85	88	80	82	5.5	9.5	3.3	48.8	48.8	
Malawi	80	80	76	76	3.9	5.7	2.3	50.7	50.1	
Malaysia	81	80	43	45	7.0	11.6	2.9	34.4	35.2	
Mali	69	65	34	37	2.0	3.2	2.8	34.9	38.3	
Mauritania	84	80	58	60	0.8	1.3	3.1	42.0	42.9	
Mauritius	82	77	40	42	0.5	0.6	1.4	33.1	36.1	
Mexico	84	80	34	41	29.9	44.4	2.3	30.0	35.6	
Moldova	74	48	61	45	2.1	1.4	-2.2	48.6	51.3	
Mongolia	65	61	55	58	0.7	1.1	2.5	46.2	49.1	
Morocco	82	80	24	25	7.7	11.2	2.3	23.5	24.7	
Mozambique	84	77	86	88	6.2	9.9	2.8	54.7	56.1	
Myanmar	88	86	69	69	20.2	27.9	1.9	44.7	45.3	
Namibia	65	59	49	49	0.4	0.7	2.7	45.2	46.3	
Nepal	80	76	48	59	7.1	11.7	2.9	37.9	45.2	
Netherlands	70	71	43	57	6.9	8.5	1.2	39.1	45.0	
New Zealand	74	75	54	61	1.7	2.3	1.7	43.1	45.9	
Nicaragua	85	87	39	38	1.4	2.2	2.8	32.1	31.0	
Niger	87	88	41	39	2.6	4.7	3.6	32.5	30.7	
Nigeria	75	71	37	39	28.4	45.3	2.7	34.0	35.9	
Norway	73	71	57	62	2.2	2.5	0.8	44.7	47.1	
Oman	81	77	20	26	0.6	1.0	3.0	14.2	19.6	
Pakistan	86	85	11	21	30.1	56.2	3.7	10.9	18.7	
Panama	81	80	37	48	0.9	1.5	2.9	30.9	37.1	
Papua New Guinea	75	73	71	71	1.8	2.7	2.6	46.7	49.2	
Paraguay	83	84	52	71	1.7	3.1	3.6	38.0	45.2	
Peru	76	82	48	64	8.3	14.1	3.1	39.1	43.9	
Philippines	83	80	47	50	23.5	36.9	2.7	36.6	38.3	
Poland	72	61	55	47	18.1	17.3	-0.2	45.4	45.4	
Portugal	73	70	50	56	4.8	5.6	0.9	42.8	46.3	
Puerto Rico	61	58	31	38	1.2	1.5	1.4	35.8	42.3	



	Labor force participation rate					Labor force				
	Male		% ages 15 and older		Female	Total millions		Ages 15 and older average annual % growth	Female % of labor force	
	1990	2007	1990	2007		1990	2007		1990	2007
Romania	67	60	55	46	10.8	9.7	-0.6	46.7	45.0	
Russian Federation	76	69	60	57	77.0	75.8	-0.1	48.5	49.5	
Rwanda	88	79	86	81	3.2	4.4	2.0	51.7	52.9	
Saudi Arabia	80	80	15	19	5.1	8.7	3.2	11.2	14.9	
Senegal	90	86	61	62	3.3	5.3	2.9	40.1	42.2	
Serbia	..	60	..	43	..	3.1	..	..	42.5
Sierra Leone	65	67	66	65	1.6	2.2	2.0	51.6	50.3	
Singapore	79	76	51	54	1.6	2.4	2.7	39.1	41.1	
Slovak Republic	79	69	66	52	2.9	2.7	-0.3	47.2	44.6	
Slovenia	76	65	60	52	1.1	1.0	-0.3	46.3	45.9	
Somalia	89	89	52	54	2.6	3.4	1.7	37.6	38.9	
South Africa	64	60	44	47	11.6	17.4	2.4	41.9	45.2	
Spain	69	68	34	47	15.9	22.0	1.9	34.4	41.5	
Sri Lanka	79	75	46	43	7.3	9.0	1.2	36.1	37.2	
Sudan	78	72	24	31	7.3	11.9	2.9	23.4	30.4	
Swaziland	79	69	66	62	0.3	0.5	2.7	51.1	50.1	
Sweden	72	69	63	61	4.7	4.9	0.2	47.7	47.0	
Switzerland	79	75	49	60	3.6	4.2	1.0	39.4	45.8	
Syrian Arab Republic	81	78	18	21	3.3	6.4	4.0	18.3	20.8	
Tajikistan	84	67	75	56	2.4	2.6	0.4	48.2	46.6	
Tanzania	93	90	89	87	12.5	19.9	2.7	50.1	49.8	
Thailand	87	81	76	66	31.6	36.6	0.9	47.3	46.8	
Timor-Leste	81	83	52	58	0.3	0.4	2.0	38.1	40.4	
Togo	89	87	53	52	1.5	2.6	3.2	38.6	38.3	
Trinidad and Tobago	76	77	39	55	0.5	0.7	2.4	34.9	42.6	
Tunisia	76	71	21	26	2.4	3.7	2.5	21.6	26.5	
Turkey	81	71	34	24	21.0	24.2	0.8	29.4	26.8	
Turkmenistan	75	71	63	59	1.5	2.2	2.4	47.3	46.9	
Uganda	92	90	80	82	8.0	13.5	3.1	47.4	47.8	
Ukraine	72	65	57	53	26.0	23.3	-0.6	49.4	49.3	
United Arab Emirates	92	93	25	40	1.0	2.7	6.2	9.8	14.5	
United Kingdom	75	70	53	56	29.5	31.4	0.4	43.3	45.5	
United States	76	72	57	59	129.3	156.6	1.1	44.3	45.7	
Uruguay	72	75	43	53	1.3	1.6	1.2	39.8	43.5	
Uzbekistan	85	70	76	58	9.7	11.8	1.1	48.3	46.0	
Venezuela, RB	82	81	32	52	7.0	12.7	3.5	27.8	38.9	
Vietnam	81	76	74	69	31.4	44.4	2.0	48.4	47.9	
West Bank and Gaza	67	67	10	14	0.4	0.8	4.1	11.9	16.9	
Yemen, Rep.	70	66	15	22	2.5	5.4	4.6	17.5	24.4	
Zambia	81	81	59	60	3.1	4.6	2.3	42.6	43.2	
Zimbabwe	80	80	68	60	4.2	5.7	1.9	46.4	43.3	
World	81 w	78 w	52 w	53 w	2,352.2 t	3,098.8 t	1.6 w	39.3 w	40.3 w	
Low income	84	82	56	56	342.8	542.8	2.7	40.1	40.7	
Middle income	83	79	53	52	1,565.5	2,039.7	1.6	38.6	39.5	
Lower middle income	84	80	55	53	1,270.7	1,661.6	1.6	38.6	38.9	
Upper middle income	78	73	46	50	294.8	378.1	1.5	38.7	42.1	
Low & middle income	83	79	53	53	1,908.3	2,582.5	1.8	38.9	39.7	
East Asia & Pacific	84	80	69	67	858.7	1,081.5	1.4	44.2	44.5	
Europe & Central Asia	76	67	57	50	206.6	207.2	0.0 ^a	46.1	45.5	
Latin America & Carib.	82	80	38	53	165.1	262.2	2.7	32.1	40.8	
Middle East & N. Africa	77	74	21	26	62.4	106.2	3.1	21.3	26.1	
South Asia	85	82	36	36	421.5	607.9	2.2	28.2	29.1	
Sub-Saharan Africa	82	80	58	60	194.1	317.5	2.9	42.3	43.5	
High income	74	70	49	52	443.9	516.3	0.9	41.4	43.4	
Euro area	69	65	42	48	135.8	154.3	0.7	39.9	43.8	

a. Less than 0.05.

About the data

The labor force is the supply of labor available for producing goods and services in an economy. It includes people who are currently employed and people who are unemployed but seeking work as well as first-time job-seekers. Not everyone who works is included, however. Unpaid workers, family workers, and students are often omitted, and some countries do not count members of the armed forces. Labor force size tends to vary during the year as seasonal workers enter and leave.

Data on the labor force are compiled by the International Labour Organization (ILO) from labor force surveys, censuses, establishment censuses and surveys, and administrative records such as employment exchange registers and unemployment insurance schemes. For some countries a combination of these sources is used. Labor force surveys are the most comprehensive source for internationally comparable labor force data. They can cover all noninstitutionalized civilians, all branches and sectors of the economy, and all categories of workers, including people holding multiple jobs. By contrast, labor force data from population censuses are often based on a limited number of questions on the economic characteristics of individuals, with little scope to probe. The resulting data often differ from labor force survey data and vary considerably by country, depending on the census scope and coverage. Establishment censuses and surveys provide data only on the employed population, not unemployed workers, workers in small establishments, or workers in the informal sector (ILO, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market 2001–2002*).

The reference period of a census or survey is another important source of differences: in some countries data refer to people's status on the day of the census or survey or during a specific period before the inquiry date, while in others data are recorded without reference to any period. In developing countries, where the household is often the basic unit of production and all members contribute to output, but some at low intensity or irregularly, the estimated labor force may be much smaller than the numbers actually working.

Differing definitions of employment age also affect comparability. For most countries the working age is 15 and older, but in some countries children younger than 15 work full- or part-time and are included in the estimates. Similarly, some countries have an upper age limit. As a result, calculations may systematically over- or underestimate actual rates. For

further information on source, reference period, or definition, consult the original source.

The labor force participation rates in the table are from the ILO database, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 5th edition. These harmonized estimates use strict data selection criteria and enhanced methods to ensure comparability across countries and over time, including collection and tabulation methodologies and methods applied to such country-specific factors as military service requirements. Estimates are based mainly on labor force surveys, with other sources (population censuses and nationally reported estimates) used only when no survey data are available.

Participation rates indicate the relative size of the labor supply. Beginning in the 2008 edition of *World Development Indicators*, the indicator covers the population ages 15 and older, to include people who continue working past age 65. In previous editions the indicator was for the population ages 15–64, so participation rates are not comparable across editions.

The labor force estimates in the table were calculated by applying labor force participation rates from the ILO database to World Bank population estimates to create a series consistent with these population estimates. This procedure sometimes results in labor force estimates that differ slightly from those in the ILO's *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* and its database Key Indicators of the Labour Market.

Estimates of women in the labor force and employment are generally lower than those of men and are not comparable internationally, reflecting that demographic, social, legal, and cultural trends and norms determine whether women's activities are regarded as economic. In many countries many women work on farms or in other family enterprises without pay, and others work in or near their homes, mixing work and family activities during the day.

Definitions

- **Labor force participation rate** is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period.
- **Total labor force** is people ages 15 and older who meet the ILO definition of the economically active population. It includes both the employed and the unemployed.
- **Average annual percentage growth of the labor force** is calculated using the exponential endpoint method (see *Statistical methods* for more information).
- **Female labor force as a percentage of the labor force** shows the extent to which women are active in the labor force.

Data sources

Data on labor force participation rates are from the ILO database Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 5th edition. Labor force numbers were calculated by World Bank staff, applying labor force participation rates from the ILO database to population estimates.